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scarcity in the future. That is to say, because we have had abundance and consequent low prices of wheat, resulting in a high unit consumption and a low yield, therefore we must expect that in the future we shall have a high unit consumption and a low yield, resulting in scarcity and high prices. Certain passages in the volume might even be construed to say that we shall presently suffer privation because of the excessive prosperity and efficiency of our industry in the future.

So far as the essay is an argument for impending scarcity it proceeds on the assumption that "other circumstances remain the same," particularly the adverse circumstances. But there appears to be no reason for believing that other things will remain the same in the immediate future, any more consistently than they have done in the past. It may therefore fairly be doubted whether Sir William's draft on the future's bank of misery will be honored, since it is drawn with this proviso.

T. V.

Die Entstehung des socialen Problems. VON ARNOLD FISCHER.

Rostock i. M.: C. J. E. Volckmann, 1896-1898. 8vo. pp. xvi + 781.

THE social problem with which the author is occupied is of course the problem which modern socialism offers to solve. A solution is sought in a "science of civilization," differing from earlier attempts at such a science, particularly in the degree of profundity and exhaustiveness with which the causes of cultural growth and the controlling principles of development are examined and formulated. If once an adequate theory of culture has been established, the author feels, the rest follows as a matter of course, though not necessarily by an easy and unlaborious inference, from the main drift of this theory. The social problem which confronts the present generation is a necessary phenomenon of the present phase of culture; it is a fruit which in the natural course ripens at the present stage of cultural maturity, and at no other stage. If we can find wherein consists the essential character of the growth in cultural maturity, we shall, therefore, have a key to the successive emergence of the problems that arise in the life history of society as well as to their significance for the growth of civilization and to their practical solution.

The degree of maturity attained by human culture at any given phase is a question of the degree of exhaustion of the vitality of the

culture in question. The ultimate ground of the problem characteristic of any given cultural phase is, therefore, the intensity of vital force which expresses itself in this cultural phase. "Zeitprobleme sind daher Gradmesser der Lebenskraft und damit der Höhe des Lebensalters jener Cultur, aus der sie emporstiegen" (p. 3). At the same time. "Ein Zeitproblem ist das Bewusstsein eines Uebels des Gemeinwesens" (p. 5). We have therefore to seek a formulation of the course of civilization "as the resultant of a clearly determined law." And since mankind is but a part of the organic world, human civilization is but the resultant of the same forces which determine the development of species in plant and animal life. Now, the sweeping characteristic of the life process of organisms is a continuous decline in the intensity of the forces engaged. Observed phases of development are therefore expressions of stages in the decline of intensity of the life process. This law holds throughout organic life, and as the course of organic development and of culture proceeds we have, as the result of advancing decrepitude, an advance from a blind but fierce assimilative growth, through instinct, feeling, reflection, to rationality and to pure reason. The latter phase of development, the phase characteristic of senile decay, is now upon us, and our social problem is an expression of the evils peculiar to the social organism at this stage. The working class of the present day is the class of pure reason.

With this clue the author cheerfully constructs his comprehensive theory of cultural growth, and apart from this grotesque resort to analogies and metaphysical entities there appears to be but little of a theoretical kind that is new or characteristic in the volume. The theoretical contribution here offered may be taken as an extreme case of that recourse to mystical interpretation, which any reader of the later German speculations in social and economic theory must be prepared to face. But for all his mysticism, the author shows a wide acquaintance with the data of his subject, and no mean capacity for turning them to account.

T. V.

Pamphlets socialistes: Le droit à la paresse; La religion du capital; L'appétit vendu; Pie IX au paradis. Par PAUL LAFARGUE. Paris: V. Giard & E. Brière, 1900. 12mo. pp. 164.

THESE discourses, reprinted here in collected form from widely separate dates, are held in the light and easy vein characteristic of M.